

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 TRSE-00 DHA-02 ACDA-07 MCT-01 IO-13 OMB-01
COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 /094 W
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P R 191011Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 371
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION NATO
USEC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 3921

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, PINS, SP
SUBJECT: PNV CONCERNS OVER BASQUE SITUATION

1. PEDRO BEITIA, FORMER UNOFFICIAL BASQUE NATIONALIST PARTY (PNV) REPRESENTATIVE IN WASHINGTON, AND PNV NOTABLE JULIO JAUREGUI CAME TO THE EMBASSY MAY 17 AT THEIR REQUEST TO EXPRESS THE PNV'S DEEP CONCERNS OVER THE DETERIORATION OF THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE BASQUE PROVINCES. THEY SPOKE BRIEFLY WITH THE AMBASSADOR AND HAD AN EXTENDED CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, IN WHICH THEY SOUGHT TO IMPRESS ON THE U.S. THE GRAVITY OF THE SITUATION AND THE NECESSITY FOR A TOTAL AMNESTY AND THE IMPOSITION OF RESTRAINT ON THE POLICE AS THE ONLY BASIS FOR A RETURN TO POLITICAL
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NORMALCY IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY.

2. BOTH BEITIA AND JAUREGUI WERE PARTICULARLY WORRIED THAT THE UPSURGE OF VIOLENCE IN THE BASQUE PROVINCES REINFORCED THE EFFORTS OF BOTH LEFT AND RIGHT EXTREMES TO DERAIL THE DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS AND THAT IN PARTICULAR THE ACTIVITIES OF EXTREMIST BASQUE GROUPS PLAYED

INTO THE HANDS OF THE ULTRA-RIGHT AND MIGHT PROVOKE THE MILITARILY INTO INTERVENING. AT THE SAME TIME, JAUREGUI AFFIRMED THAT EXTREMIST PRESSURES NOTWITHSTANDING, THE PNV WOULD DEFINITELY PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTIONS, SINCE IT WAS CONVINCED THAT A DEMOCRATIC PARLIAMENT, WITH BASQUE PARTICIPATION, WAS THE KEY TO LASTING STABILITY IN THE FOUR PROVINCES.

3. BUT A TOTAL AMNESTY HAD TO COME, HE SAID, BETTER SOONER THAN LATER. JAUREGUI SAID HE ASSUMED SUAREZ HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO DELIVER ON HIS PERSONAL PROMISE TO HAVE ALL BASQUE POLITICAL PRISONERS OUT OF JAIL BY LAST ABERRI EGUNA (EASTER SUNDAY) BECAUSE OF RIGHTIST RESISTANCE, INCLUDING FROM WITHIN THE MILITARY, AND DUE TO THE INABILITY OR UNWILLINGNESS OF SOME GOVT MINISTERS (JAUREGUI OBVIOUSLY HAD A LOW OPINION OF INTERIOR MINISTER MARTIN VILLA) TO CARRY OUT THE PROGRAM OF RELEASES. EVEN SO, IN JAUREGUI'S VIEW THE GOVT HAD TO BITE THE BULLET AND GET ON WITH RELEASING THE REMAINING 27 BASQUE PRISONERS. HE SAID HE HAD SUGGESTED TO JUSTICE MINISTER LAVILLA (WHOM HE CHARACTERIZED AS INTELLIGENT BUT POLITICALLY TIMID) THAT THE INDIVIDUAL REVIEW OF THE MOST SENSITIVE CASES BEGIN LONG AGO, SHORTLY AFTER THE KING'S AMNESTY/PARDON WENT INTO EFFECT. THIS HAD NOT BEEN DONE, HOWEVER, AND THE REVIEW PROCESS WAS ONLY NOW BEGINNING (MADRID 3855 AND PREVIOUS).

4. ACCORDING TO JAUREGUI, THE 8 PRISONERS ALREADY SERVING SENTENCES COULD BE PARDONED RATHER EASILY, AT LEAST THEO-
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RETICALLY. MOST OF THEM HAD BEEN CONVICTED AND SENTENCED IN THE CONTROVERSIAL "BURGOS TRIAL" OF 1970, WHICH, JAUREGUI POINTED OUT, HAD BEEN NOTORIOUSLY SHORT ON DUE PROCESS. MOREOVER, THE COMBINED EFFECT OF VARIOUS PARDONS HAD REDUCED THEIR SENTENCES TO THE POINT WHERE THEY WOULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR PAROLE IN A FEW YEARS. CONSEQUENTLY, PARDONS FOR THEM WOULD BE JUSTIFIABLE BOTH ON THE GROUNDS OF THEIR FAILURE TO BE ACCORDED A FAIR TRIAL AND THAT A PARDON NOW WOULD CUT RELATIVELY FEW YEARS OFF WHAT REMAINED OF THEIR SENTENCES ANYWAY.

5. THE SITUATIONS OF THE 19 OTHER BASQUE PRISONERS, WHO WERE AWAITING TRIAL, WERE MORE COMPLICATED. FIRST, IT WAS MORE DIFFICULT TO SPEAK IN TERMS OF AMNESTY OR PARDON WHEN CASES HAD NOT EVEN ADJUDICATED AND SENTENCES HANDED DOWN. MOREOVER, MANY OF THESE 19 WERE SUSPECTED OF INVOLVEMENT IN HIGHLY CONTROVERSIAL CASES, SUCH AS THE CARRERO ASSASSINATION, THE CALLE DE CORREOS BOMBING, AND THE BERAZADI KIDNAPPING/MURDER. THESE TRIALS, JAUREGUI

CONTINUED, WERE FAR OVERDUE, AND THE GOVT SHOULD EITHER
MOVE TO GET ON WITH JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS, OR, IF IT
LACKED EVIDENCE, SHOULD RELEASE THOSE BEING HELD.

6. JAUREGUI DID NOT MINIMIZE THE DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED
IN FREEING THESE REMAINING PRISONERS. BUT HE RETURNED
TO HIS -- AND THE PNV'S -- DEEP CONVICTION THAT THESE
RELEASES ARE AN ESSENTIAL PRE-CONDITION FOR POLITICAL
STABILITY IN THE BASQUE PROVINCES. HE REITERATED THE
WIDELY HELD BASQUE POSITION THAT "BLOK CRIMES" HAD BEEN
COMMITTED BY BOTH THE POLICE AND BASQUE EXTREMISTS AND
THAT THE SLATE ON BOTH SIDES HAD TO BE WIPED CLEAN IN
ORDER TO START ANEW.

7. WE NOTE THERE IS EVIDENCE THE GOS IS SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING
FURTHER EFFORTS IN THE AMNESTY ISSUE, AND
REPORTS HAVE APPEARED IN THE PRESS THAT THE IDEA
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OF EXILING THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL PRISONERS ABROAD
HAS BEEN RESURRECTED. STABLER

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Message Attributes

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